

Conservation and Development Committee

Public Hearing-February 11, 2014

Testimony from Ryan Odinak, Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County

Please deliver to committee members and put into the public record.

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today in support of arts and culture funding within the Department of Economic and Community Development's Budget. As a Board member of the CT Arts Alliance and the Executive Director of a regional arts and culture service organization I am aware of the important role arts and cultural organizations and artists play in our communities.

In this mid-budget cycle I urge you to consider an increase of \$1,818,200 to overall arts and culture funding—both arts line items and the Arts Commission competitive grants line—to bring funding to \$10,000,000. This would allow for restoration of line-item funding to 2012-2013 levels and an increase to the competitive grant fund which is distributed across CT. In addition, I urge you to fully fund the CT Arts Endowment Fund retroactively—as it funds basic operating support across the state and is an essential and equitable mechanism for delivering funds. **I have included notes on specific recommended allocations below.**

I urge you to consider the following when making your decision:

The arts are a fundamental component of a healthy society, based on virtues that touch the individual, community, and the nation—benefits that persist even in difficult social and economic times:

- **Aesthetics:** The arts create beauty and preserve it as part of culture
- **Creativity:** The arts encourage creativity, a critical skill in a dynamic world
- **Expression:** Artistic work lets us communicate our interests and visions
- **Identity:** Arts goods, services, and experiences help define our culture
- **Innovation:** The arts are sources of new ideas, futures, concepts, and connections
- **Preservation:** Arts and culture keep our collective memories intact
- **Prosperity:** The arts create jobs and enhance economic health
- **Skills:** Arts aptitudes and techniques are needed in all sectors of society and work
- **Social Capital:** We enjoy the arts together, across races, generations, and places

In addition, the recent Arts & Economic Prosperity IV study, a study conducted by Americans for the Arts, revealed **that the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences in the State of CT generates over \$652,960,811.** This includes over \$59,000,000 in revenue generated for local and state governments and over \$462,526,000 in income paid to residents who occupy over 18,314 jobs in the State. These numbers were generated through surveys from only 329 of the 1,138 eligible nonprofit arts and culture organizations and 2,862 audience-intercept studies, indicating that the actual total economic impact is much larger.

Thank you for your past support and your consideration today. I look forward to speaking to you individually about these suggestions.

Ryan Odinak, Executive Director, Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County

Recommendations below page 2.

**Recommendations for
2014-2015 Increases to Arts
and Culture Funding**

T342	DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	FY15- Governor's Budget/ No change from 2013- 2014	RECOMMENDED for 2014-2015 (restoration of directed local funding to 2012- 2013 level and increase to competitive grants line)	Difference Between Governors Budget
T348	Hartford Urban Arts Grant	359,776	378,712	18,936
T349	New Britain Arts Alliance	71,956	75,743	3,787
T355	Neighborhood Music School	50,000	50,000	0
T358	Discovery Museum	359,776	378,712	18,936
T359	National Theatre for the Deaf	143,910	151,484	7,574
T364	CT Flagship Producing Theaters Grant	475,000	500,000	25,000
T366	Performing Arts Centers	1,439,104	1,439,104	0
T367	Performing Theaters Grant	452,857	452,857	0
T368	Arts Commission (competitive grants line)	1,797,830	3,405,543	1,607,713
T369	Greater Hartford Arts Council	89,943	94,677	4,734
T370	Stepping Stones Museum for Children	42,079	44,294	2,215

T371	Maritime Center Authority	504,949	530,196	25,247
T373	Amistad Committee for the Freedom Trail	45,000	45,000	0
T374	Amistad Vessel	359,776	378,712	18,936
T375	New Haven Festival of Arts and Ideas	757,423	797,287	39,864
T376	New Haven Arts Council	89,943	94,677	4,734
T377	Beardsley Zoo	372,539	372,539	0
T378	Mystic Aquarium	589,106	620,112	31,006
T383	Twain/Stowe Homes	90,890	95,674	4,784
T384	Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County	89,943	94,677	4,734
TOTAL		8,181,800	10,000,000	1,818,200